

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. An occupant protection device for a motor vehicle occupant, comprising:  
an airbag arranged on a motor vehicle body in the region of a lateral roof edge of a motor vehicle, the airbag being configured to deploy downwards during inflation so that the inflated airbag extends in front of at least one side window of the motor vehicle; and  
a guide extending longitudinally and being connected to the lower edge of the airbag; and wherein the guide is movably guided on the motor vehicle body in the direction of deployment of the airbag.
2. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein the guide includes a flexible traction device.
3. The occupant protection device of Claim 2, wherein the flexible traction device includes a cable or a band.
4. The occupant protection device of claim 1, further comprising a run-back stop configured to substantially prevent movement of the guide in a direction opposite to the direction of movement of the guide during the deployment of the airbag.
5. The occupant protection device of claim 2, wherein the flexible traction device is guided by a deflection element
6. The occupant protection device of Claim 4, wherein the run-back stop is positioned adjacent to a deflection element.
7. The occupant protection device of claim 1, wherein the guide includes a closed loop.
8. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein the guide is connected at a first end to the airbag and at a second end to the motor vehicle body.

9. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein the guide is guided by two deflection elements.
10. The occupant protection device of Claim 9, wherein at least one of the deflection elements is connected to the vehicle body.
11. The occupant protection device of Claim 10, wherein each of the deflection elements are connected directly to the vehicle body.
12. The occupant protection device of Claim 10, further comprising a subassembly for connecting at least one deflection element to the vehicle body.
13. The occupant protection device of Claim 9, wherein the two deflection elements are spaced apart from one another in the direction of deployment of the airbag.
14. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, further comprising a spring configured to assist the movement of the guide in the direction of deployment of the airbag.
15. The occupant protection device of Claim 9, further comprising a spring configured to tension the guide between the deflection elements.
16. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein the guide is configured to move at an inclination with respect to the main direction of deployment of the airbag so that the lower edge of the airbag is increasingly tautened during the deployment of the airbag.

17. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein guide is guided or tautened so that no substantial deflection of the guide in a direction transverse to the longitudinal direction of the guide occurs during deployment of the airbag.

18. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein at least part of the guide is attached to a plate configured to hold a gas generator for inflating the airbag.

19. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein the lower edge of the airbag is connected at a first end of the guide and is connected at a second end to the vehicle body.

20. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein the guide is located on a vertical column of the motor vehicle.

21. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein an unreleasable connection connects the guide to the airbag.

22. The occupant protection device of Claim 21, wherein the unreleasable connection is formed by welding, adhesive bonding or stitching.

23. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein the guide is releasably connected to the airbag.

24. The occupant protection device of Claim 23, wherein the connection between the guide and the airbag is formed by a clip.

25. The occupant protection device of Claim 23, wherein the guide includes a flexible traction device that loops around a component attached to the airbag.

26. The occupant protection device of Claim 1, wherein an orifice or a pocket is provided on the airbag and is configured to connect the airbag to the guide.

27. The occupant protection device of Claim 25, wherein the traction device loops around a dart attached to the airbag.

28. The occupant protection device of Claim 25, wherein the traction device loops around a portion of the airbag.

29. A protection device for motor vehicle occupants, comprising:  
an airbag configured to deploy downward along the side of the vehicle;  
a flexible cable mounted along a pillar of the vehicle and extending in a substantially vertical direction;

wherein the cable is connected to the lower edge of the airbag and is configured to move as the airbag deploys to guide and tauten the lower edge of the airbag.

30. The occupant protection device of Claim 29, wherein the cable is a closed loop.

31. The occupant protection device of Claim 30, wherein the cable is guided by a deflection elements.